

## **COLLEGE OF DIRECT SUPPORT**

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

#### **SAFETY AT HOME AND IN THE COMMUNITY**

This course provides an overview of methods for preventing and responding to safety issues at home and in the community away from home. Lessons include information on safety while driving, creating safe home environments, and safe handling of blood borne pathogens (universal precautions and OSHA requirements). Information for preventing and responding to specific situations such as fires, natural disasters, acts of terrorism, and other emergencies is covered. Throughout the lessons, the learner is asked to think about balancing safety concerns with personal choice and opportunity for people with disabilities by reflecting on examples that represent the types of challenges DSPs face today. Because safety risks have a lot to do with individual circumstances, the learner is asked to apply learning to the policies and procedures of the specific support setting in which they work, as well as to the unique needs of each person supported. The following lessons are included in this course -

#### **MALTREATMENT OF VULNERABLE ADULTS AND CHILDREN**

This course helps the learner understand what abuse, neglect, and exploitation are; how to identify suspected cases of abuse, neglect or exploitation; how to protect the person who may have been harmed from further exploitation; and how to effectively document these situations. This course teaches learners about specific reasons people with disabilities may be more vulnerable to abuse, neglect, or exploitation and what strategies they can use to reduce peoples' vulnerabilities. Protection and advocacy, state ombudsman, and other agencies that deal with abuse and neglect situations are described and explained to the learner.

**INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS AND CHOICE**

In this course, the learner gains knowledge of the rights of individuals with disabilities including a brief overview of relevant laws and their historical roots. It teaches how to balance the right to take risks with the right to be protected from harm, and provides valuable skills in facilitating choice-making by the individuals to whom DSPs provide support. It is recommended that the learner complete the course on Maltreatment of Vulnerable Adults and Children along with this course to better understand rights. While this course discusses many federal laws that concern the rights of individuals with disabilities, state and local communities also have laws that pertain to rights. Learners are encouraged to contact their state or local government representatives and their supervisor to find out about local laws. Agencies are encouraged to use the tailoring options of the CDS to identify state and local laws and information that DSPs should know.

**POSITIVE BEHAVIOR SUPPORT**

This course is an introduction to methods of supporting people who engage in challenging behaviors. Strategies that are safe, fair, compassionate, and effective in preventing and reducing problem behaviors are included. The learner is provided with definitions of challenging behavior and basic behavioral terms and principles. The learner will understand more about the history of treatment of people with developmental disabilities and why the person-centered practices at the heart of positive behavior supports are being embraced. The course teaches learners about regulations in the use of behavioral interventions and provides practical information on how to effectively support people who present behavioral challenges.

**DIRECT SUPPORT PROFESSIONALISM**

This course introduces the learner to the importance and benefits of a professional orientation to the DSP role and to the history

8-1-08

and status of the professionalism movement. The national movement to professionalize direct support is described. The reasons why professionalism is important, progress that has been made in creating a profession and how DSPs can become part of the professionalism movement are included. An ethical code for DSPs is reviewed along with ways of applying these ethical guidelines in daily practice. The following lessons are included in this course -

### **INTRODUCTION TO DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES**

This course provides the learner with a background in the history, language, and basic concepts of services for persons with developmental disabilities. In this course the learner reviews the ideas and learns the vocabulary that is important to working within the field of developmental disabilities. This information makes the learner more effective in communicating with others and in understanding the system in which developmental disabilities services are provided. The following lessons are included in this course -

### **TEACHING PEOPLE WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES**

This course is an overview of the important role that DSPs have in teaching people with developmental disabilities. It provides the learner with a basic understanding of teaching and learning, an important part of the direct support role. It helps the learner move beyond a "care-giving" role to one of being a true supporter and professional. This course helps the learner understand why it is important for all people to learn new things, what motivates people to learn, what teaching strategies help people with developmental disabilities learn, and how teaching and learning can be effectively organized.

### **PERSON-CENTERED PLANNING AND SUPPORTS**

This course will help learners understand the foundational concepts and values of Person-Centered Planning and the

8-1-08

benefits of this type of planning. The history of Person-Centered Planning is reviewed. The course includes an overview of five different types of planning as they are done today. It includes information and tips on participating meaningfully in a Person-Centered Plan. The course outlines steps that help the direct support professional bring these plans to life. Common challenges to person-centered services are reviewed and the learner is given a chance to learn about and create solutions to these types of challenges -